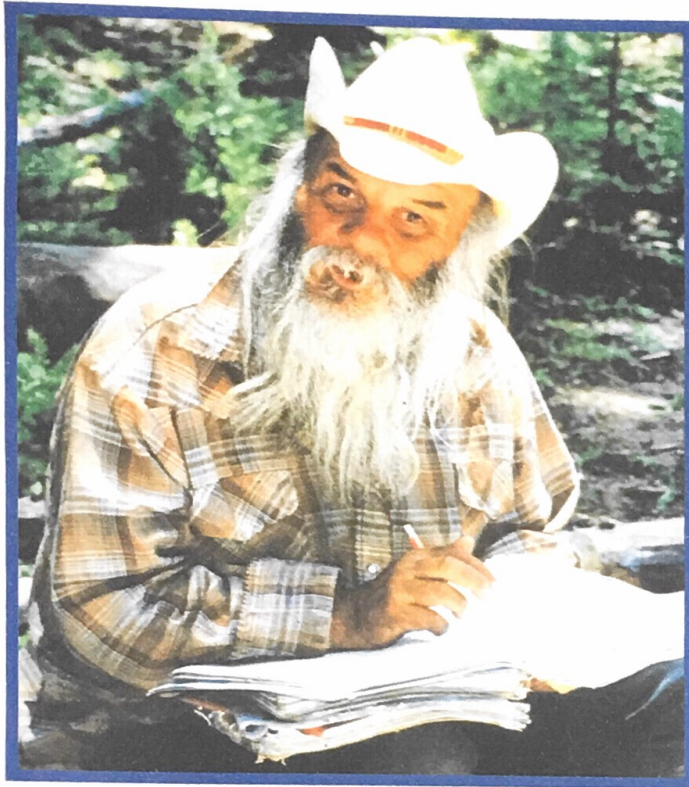


Rainbow Family Life Stories



by Jodey Bateman.
Interviews with Rainbow
Family of Living Light
folks conducted between
1977 and 2008.

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09.E RAUNCHY RON - "You Can't Hang Out
No More"

8 pages

[09.E]

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RAUNCHY RON You Can't Hang Out No More

[Raunchy Ron's father was in on the biker subculture in the early Fifties - one of the streams that flowed into the counter-culture. Ron is a good example of how runaway youth gathered around the Motherfuckers and became STP. He is also a good example of an attempt by STP'ers to settle down and start home life.]

RON - Raunchy Ron from Tucson - that's my full title. It's like the Duke of Windsor.

I was born in Tucson in 1955. My father is an operating engineer - that's a fancy word for a crane driver. My mom is a secretary. She don't live with my dad. They're both remarried.

They got divorced twice. She married him - had me and my sister - married another guy - divorced him and married my dad again and now they're divorced again and married to other people. It didn't matter to me. That all didn't stop her ping-ponging around until about when I was in junior high.

I love my father and my mother, but I can't stand them together - stabblings and busted bottles. I'm like the old man. When I get mad at Mary, my old lady, I have to bust something to keep from beating her. I come from a long line of rednecks. Half of my family - my father's side - are North Dakota rednecks and my mother's side are Oklahoma rednecks. My dad wasn't a Hell's Angel, but he rode his bike with Hell's Angels and the Gypsy Jokers. [If I hadn't been in trouble when I was young, I would have had short hair and been driving a pickup.]

We lived in Ashdown, Arkansas, when the Beatles came out. I was in grade school. The people there sure liked their football team and disliked the Beatles. I remember my first favorite song was "Hit the Road, Jack" by Ray Charles. I wanted to be an Army man or a crane operator.

We moved from Arkansas to the Bay Area of California. I hold

the record for the most time in reform school - 11 times. The first time I went to reform school was in California when I was ten. I kept going to reform school for cutting school. School was just a waste of time. They didn't teach me nothing I want to know. I know what I want to know. I can build a log cabin.

I first smoked pot when I was 12 years old in 1967 in Haight Ashbury. I lived only 12 miles from there. I went there a lot of times. I ran away from home to a place in Haight for runaways called Huckleberry House. It was a foolish move. They said if I stayed there, I had to get in touch with my parents and work things out. I got along just fine with my parents. I just didn't want to live home. I didn't want to work things out. It was more fun to be in Haight Ashbury.

The second time I ran away was a short time later. I was still 12. I had been fantasizing getting laid for a long time. The first time I ever got laid, I ran away to Haight Ashbury with the girl. She was 12, the school slut. She sure was nice. I wanted it and once I got ahold of her, I wasn't letting go of it. We hitched from Haight to Russian River, a resort. I got busted for trying to steal a thread and needle for her to fix her pants. They sent me to reform school for the eighth time. I was only in for a couple of days. I always fiddled my way out. I'm a champion bullshitter.

The last time I went to reform school, it was because I just didn't hold my shit well. I fell asleep in ninth grade class on rebs. They called the police and I didn't get out of there quick. I had 300 rebs and four lids on me. When they caught me, I started eating the rebs. I eat a whole bunch and I fell on my face. They took me to the hospital and a nurse held a bucket in front of me. I started puking all over the nurse's face. I passed out, and when I woke up, there wasn't nobody there. I snuck out, and on the way out the hospital

door, I ran into my mother's housekeeper. She was a junkie. My step brother was fucking her. I asked her if she would give me a ride and she couldn't because her brother had just gotten hit in an auto accident. So I had a friend that was living in a foster home across the street. His foster father had long hair, but he wouldn't let me hang out there.

Me and my friend were going to walk to the town where I lived, but we got caught. They held me in juvenile hall for five months to decide what to do with me. They gave me a choice of going to a juvenile penitentiary or a mental hospital for drug rehabilitation. I chose the hospital. They gave me a six month sentence, and I escaped after two months.

I went home. My mother flipped out and gave me a plane ticket and \$700 and I went to Puerto Rico with my step brother. He had a job there. It was a bad move. Puerto Rico is beautiful. The only thing wrong with Puerto Rico is these people called Puerto Ricans and they're pretty down on whites. It's an island, so I couldn't hitch hike home. That's the reason I'll never leave the United States or Canada now. I panhandled \$50 in two days at the airport - the first time I ever panhandled. I got a ticket to New York because it was the cheapest place to get a ticket to.

I went to the Lower East Side and saw my first STP'er. There was this guy with dirty leather pants and a dirty old leather shirt and an old sarape around his shoulders and he was panhandling, and it just blew me away. If somebody had told me I was going to look like that in a year, I would have said they was crazy. I had real long hair, but I was real clean cut.

So it's 1970 and I'm hanging out. I ain't got no money. I seen things in New York City I ain't never seen before, like two gays walking arm in arm. I panhandled them and they took me to a restaurant and they gave me an address. I didn't have no place to stay, so I went there around 10 o'clock.

I figured I could fight them off. But when I got there, it wasn't like that. There was that STP'er I seen earlier that day. His name was Israel. And there was Frank Motherfucker. The Motherfucker Family were the original. They were still the elite then. Then they split and half of them went into the hippy-dippy Hog Farm and half of them went STP. Frank Motherfucker looked exactly like Freewheelin' Frank in the Furry Freak Brothers. Some Motherfuckers was political, but it depends on which ones you knew. Frank wasn't political. He made me street-wise. I modeled my life on him. He's cleaned up his act now and got a job like I have.

I saw the street people at Frank's and they said, "Hey, man, you want a fifth of Jack Daniels?" and I said, "No, if you have a joint, I'll smoke it." I was all clean and young and they was all dirty and funky. I didn't drink - but give me a couple of months and I was drinking whiskey and beer and getting funkier and funkier. These was original street people - not like the punks hanging out now.

STP started in New York City. A family there had a loft with the Motherfuckers. They were called the Tuna Fish Family because they found a big crate of tuna fish and some guy turned them on to STP and they made a whole bunch of tuna fish sandwiches and put STP on them and gave them away. So they was STP.

I left New York. I flew to San Francisco. My parents sent the money, but I never made it home. I went to Berkeley to Frank's house - he was there by then. I passed out drunk and everybody pissed on me and Frank shit in a bag and put it on my head. And then when I woke up that morning, they said, "Hey man, you're STP now." I had been initiated real good.

That's what's wrong with a lot of people who are hanging out now. They claim to be STP, but they never been initiated

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by original Family. They had a ceremony. They would buy quarts of beer while you was asleep. Every time they'd finish a bottle, they'd piss in the bottle and pour it on you. It was gross, but it was Family.

I've still got the pants I was wearing that night. They're still blue jeans, but just barely. They're patched with leather all over. I don't wear them no more, because STP is dead. It's something you don't talk about. I ain't original Family, but I am almost. It may all be forgotten, which is why I'm telling it to you.

I had turned 16. A lot of people got on my case because I was young and stupid. People that didn't like me then, we all get along now. They come stay with me. I'm older, wiser, more on my case, you know, Family.

After I got initiated, I just hung out. There used to be a circuit that everybody went to. Cambridge-Berkeley-Tucson-Albuquerque-Ann Arbor-Boulder. That's where everybody hung out, but now those towns are pretty well all burnt out and everybody has spread out.

I was surprised when I was in Berkeley to find out that people hung out in Tucson. I'm proud to be from Tucson because it's a part of western American history. I ain't from some funky place like New Jersey or Wisconsin. Like who cares about being from Madison, Wisconsin? I'm from a real place that people dream about. I'm the only person I know that was born there.

I had a good time at the Rainbow Gathering in Granby, Colorado in 1972. There was a whole delegation of STP'ers there, so you know there was a good time. I got two leeches on my leg. I got drunk. I sniffed some paint. It was at an STP wedding at the gathering. Goldfinger married a girl and we huffed gold paint. That was his specialty. It was how he got his name - getting gold paint all over his fingers when he sniffed it. Goldfinger's marriage didn't last long. He's in prison now for rape.

But as far as going OM Shanti and eating brown rice, I

ain't into that. When they start OM I just leave the room. There ain't no God. When you die, you're just gonna lay in the ground and rot. They forced me to go to Sunday School and I didn't believe it for a second.

I went to the gathering in Wyoming. Don't get me wrong - I had a good time, but I don't believe in all their stuff.

Out of 6,000 people that showed up, one went to jail - me. I wasn't at the gathering site. I was in the town of Lander and got drunk on a bottle of tequila. They put me in jail for 17 days. It wasn't so bad - sometimes it's all right to go to jail. I had a fight every night with the Indians in jail. I always won the fights because they was drunk and I was sober.

I met up with my old lady in Austin. I had just took a shit and I stepped out of the bathroom and I seen her with an old time buddy of mine. She was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. She was like a vision. I wish my old lady had been a virgin - but then I got some strange morals. I've only had one virgin. But if there had been just virgins, I wouldn't have gotten laid when I was 12.

In 1975 I went with Mary, my old lady to Vermont, to Earth People's Park. That was a big turning point. There's some good people living there. They got themselves homes and chickens and kids and stuff. Their biggest hassle was some ass holes came up from Boston and they got in a hassle about who was to sleep in the tent and one of them stabbed the other and killed him. That's a real initiation, to be in Vermont for a winter. These people ain't no Rainbow Family organic-mechanics. They'll eat a porcupine, beef, anything else. That was the first time I ever had to work, not because of money, but to save my life. If I didn't work, I had to scrounge off somebody else or I had to die. I was a quarter mile from the Canadian border. It was like 50, 60 below. My

old lady was pregnant. If I didn't cut wood, I was dead. When that winter was over, I felt like a man for the first time.

I've hung out on reservations and I've read everything on Indians that I could get my hands on. That's about all I read. Me and my old lady, that's what we're into. I used to own a tipi.

We went from Vermont back to Austin. That's always been my town, someplace I could feel like I was somebody, not just another Joe.

I walk down the street and everybody sticks their head out the window and says, "Hey, Ron!" They all know me.

Our child was born dead. I was there for the birth. They tried to tell me to leave, but I didn't. Because we knew he was dead before he was born, because they couldn't pick up his heart beat with an electric stethoscope. He had strangled on his umbilical cord. I want a kid so bad. We've had one born dead and two miscarriages, but the doctor says we can still do it, we're healthy people.

I got a house and four TV's and four stereos. I got a broken down pickup and a broken down van. I'm definitely settled down. I have a profession. I'm an apartment maintenance man. I fix refrigerators and air conditioners. I like having my own place and being able to tell somebody I don't like to get the fuck out. I like being on a power trip. I like being able to say how I feel. I'm gonna really dig when I'm older. I want to be 85.

Being settled is better than being on the streets. The streets are all dead. All the main towns to hang out in are dead, burnt out. Austin's pretty dead itself. Maybe the small towns ain't dead - maybe Madison, Norman, Chapel Hill - small college towns that ain't nobody ever heard of. I've gotten pretty uppity. I don't like to panhandle. You can't hang out no more.

[The last time I saw Raunchy Ron was at the Arizona

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Gathering in 1979. Since then he has split up with Mary,
his old lady, and moved to New Mexico. Now he calls
himself Breaking Wind.]